



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

A new witness to Michael Psellos' poem 'On Medicine' ('De Medicina')

Citation for published version:

Bouras-Vallianatos, P 2015, 'A new witness to Michael Psellos' poem 'On Medicine' ('De Medicina')', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, vol. 65, pp. 9-12. <https://doi.org/10.1553/joeb65s9>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1553/joeb65s9](https://doi.org/10.1553/joeb65s9)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



PETROS BOURAS-VALLIANATOS

A new witness to Michael Psellos' poem "On Medicine" ("De medicina")*

Abstract: This paper deals with a new fragmentary witness, viz. Library of the Hellenic Parliament (Athens) 84, to Michael Psellos' didactic poem "On Medicine". It is divided into three parts: a brief codicological description of the manuscript, a detailed presentation of the various connections between the new witness and the extant manuscripts of the complete work, and a list of peculiar readings of the new witness accompanied by some suggestions for the improvement of the most recent critical edition of the work.

During a recent visit to the Library of the Hellenic Parliament in Athens I had the opportunity to consult one of the few medical manuscripts in the collection, codex no. 84. The manuscript consists of 180 folia and according to the current catalogue dates to the fourteenth century.¹ It contains various medical treatises, some excerpts from larger works such as the Hippocratic *Aphorisms* and various short medical opuscles and collections of recipes, intermixed with collections of letters, short lexica, and brief theological works. A group of seven folia, viz. ff. 34-40, was not originally part of the codex, but seem to have been inserted in a rebinding at a later stage. It is noteworthy that there is no direct connection between the contents of these folia and any other text in the manuscript; the sole traceable watermark is found on f. 36 and is possibly similar to Mošin & Traljić 6232 (*monts*), attested in the fourteenth century,² and very similar to Piccard 150005 (*dreiberg*), attested in 1456.³

Among the contents of the aforementioned folia is an excerpt from Michael Psellos' long didactic poem *On Medicine*, which was not taken into account in the most recent edition of the poem by Leendert Westerink.⁴ The poem is written in iambic dodecasyllables and is intended to provide an elementary introduction to medicine for the non-specialist.⁵ The excerpt is acephalous, starting two lines from the bottom of f. 34^r and ending in the middle of f. 38^v. The text corresponds to lines 1-2, 17-19, 21-189, and 191-242 of Westerink's edition.⁶ It is noteworthy that line 242

* I would like to thank Stratis Papaioannou, Sophia Xenophontos and the two anonymous referees for their useful comments on earlier drafts of this article. Many thanks go to Marc D. Lauxtermann for his specialised advice on specific parts of this paper. I am also grateful to Angeliki Karapanou (Special Collections Librarian) for facilitating *in situ* access to the codex at the Library of the Hellenic Parliament in Athens.

¹ For a physical description and a list of contents of the manuscript, see S. LAMPROS, Κατάλογος τῶν Κωδίκων τῶν ἐν Ἀθήναις Βιβλιοθηκῶν πλὴν τῆς Ἐθνικῆς. Α'. Κώδικες τῆς Βιβλιοθήκης τῆς Βουλῆς (αα. 80-85). *NE* 4 (1907) 225-236, 229-236.

² V. MOŠIN – A. TRALIĆ, *Filigranes des XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, 2 vols. Zagreb 1957.

³ G. PICCARD, Wasserzeichenkartei Piccard (<http://www.piccard-online.de>, accessed 18 September 2015).

⁴ L. WESTERINK, *Michaelis Pselli Poemata*. Leipzig 1992, xx-xxi, does not refer to this manuscript in the discussion of the textual tradition of the work. It is noteworthy that the codex is mentioned in P. MOORE, *Iter Psellianum*. Toronto 2005, 486.

⁵ A short study of the poem and its sources is provided by A. HOHLWEG, Medizinischer 'Enzyklopädismus' und das *ΠΙΟΝΗΜΑ ΙΑΤΡΙΚΟΝ* des Michael Psellos. *BZ* 81 (1988) 39-49. A paraphrase of the poem in German accompanied by a detailed *apparatus fontium* is given by R. VOLK, Der medizinische Inhalt der Schriften des Michael Psellos (*MBM* 32) München 1990, 52-102. See also W. HÖRANDNER, The Byzantine Didactic Poem – A Neglected Literary Genre? A Survey with Special Reference to the Eleventh Century, in: *Poetry and its Contexts in Eleventh-century Byzantium* (ed. F. BERNARD – K. DEMOEN). Farnham 2012, 55-67, 61, who briefly discusses the audience of this poem.

⁶ Michael Psellos, *De medicina* (WESTERINK, *Poemata*, 190-233).

coincides with the end of the first part of the work according to the extant manuscripts. There are three extant manuscripts of the complete work: Parisinus gr. 1630 (fourteenth century, ff. 32^r-42^v), Urbana (Illinois) X.612.36-T.34e (olim. Ricci 4) (fourteenth century, ff. 15^v-37^v), and Phillippicus 1566 (sixteenth century, ff. 38^r-52^r). According to Westerink, the first two are considered ‘twin’ manuscripts (‘duobus tantum codicibus, iisque geminis, nititur’), while Phillippicus 1566 is reported as a direct copy of Parisinus gr. 1630.⁷ It is worth reproducing the sigla of Westerink’s edition revised accordingly:

A = Library of the Hellenic Parliament (Athens) 84, ff. 34^r-38^v

Q = Parisinus gr 1630, ff. 32^r-42^v

u = Urbana (Illinois) X.612.36-T.34e (olim. Ricci 4), ff. 15^v-37^v

Boiss = ed. J. F. Boissonade⁸

West = ed. L. Westerink.

The small number of extant manuscripts coupled with the fragmentary version of the text in our new witness make any attempt to draw up a stemma of relationships between **A**, **Q**, and **u** imprudent. However, we can notice the following similarities between **A** and the other two manuscripts:

I. **A** has some errors in common with **Q**:

38 ὄλης **u**: ὄλη **AQ**

122 ἀσπάραγος **u**: ἀσπάραγος **AQ**

125 ἐξηραμμένον **u**: ἐξηραμμένον **AQ**

183 σηρικὰ **u**: συρικὰ **AQ**

II. **A** has some variant readings in common with **u**:

68 γνωρίσειεν **Q**: -ειαν **Au**

92 ταύτας **Q**: ταῦτα **Au**

123 γογγύλη **Q**: στρογγύλη **A**, -λ(η) **u** (ante corr.)

175 γ’ **Q**: om. **Au**

190 lin. habet **Q**: om. **Au**

201 δείκνυνται **Q**: δείκνυται **Au**

216 ἐμμόνως **Q**: ἐκβολαῖς **A**, ἐκβόλ() **u**

231 θλίβει **Q**: τρίβει **Au**

233 νόει **Q**: φρόνει **Au**

III. **A** has some variant readings in common with both **Q** and **u**:

46 ὑπόξανθον Boiss: ὑπόξανθος **AQu**

53 πέψις Boiss: σκέψις **AQu**

76 ψυχρὸν scr. West: ψυχρὰν **AQu**

79 ξηροῦ scr. West: ξηρᾶς **AQu** | σκληραὶ scr. West: ξηραὶ **AQu**

80 ὕγροῦ scr. West: ὕγρᾶς **AQu**

226 τευθὶς scr. West: τεφθὶς **AQu**

⁷ WESTERINK, *Poemata*, xx-xxi.

⁸ Michael Psellos, *De medicina* (ed. J. F. BOISSONADE, *Anecdota Graeca*. Paris 1829, I 175-232); this edition is based on **Q**.

The similarities mentioned above suggest some sort of relationship between **A** and **Qu**; it should be noted that there is a much closer relationship between **A** and **u** than there is between either of them and **Q**. However, **A** has a considerable number of readings peculiar to it, which preclude a direct association with **Q** and **u**.

IVa. Peculiar readings of **A**:

- 1 ἄκουε **Qu**: μάνθανε **A**
22 λουτρῶν **Qu**: -τρὸν **A**
30 τε **Qu**: δὲ **A**
46 μέσοις **Qu**: νέοις **A**
50 ἐξηραμμένων **Qu**: ἐξηραμένων **A**
54 ἥττων **Qu**: ἥττον **A**
55 ἀσθενεστέρα **Qu**: ἀκριβεστέρα **A**
56 ψύχους **Qu**: δίψους **A**
57 φρόνει **Qu**: νόει **A**
60 εἰλικρινοῦς **Qu**: -ῆς **A**
65 γνωριστικὰ **Qu**: γνωστικὰ **A**
66 σφυγμοὶ **Qu**: σφιγμοὶ **A**
69 σφυγμὸς **Q** p. c.: χυμὸς **u**, **Q** a. c. (?): θυμὸς **A**
79 σύμβολα **Qu**: -ον **A**
85 τι **Qu**: om. **A**
105 σκόλυμος Boiss: κόλυμος **A**: -μβος **Qu**
107 δυσστόμαχος **Qu**: δυστόμαχος **A**
116 εὔσιτον **Qu**: ἄσιτον **A**
129 δυσστομαχήσεις **Qu**: δυστομαχήσεις **A**
136 ὕδνον **Qu**: ὕπνον **A** | καταψῦχον **Q**: κατάψυχον **u**: ἄψυχον **A** | post καταψῦχον
add. τὸ **A**
139 αὖ **Qu**: om. **A**
143 διαθρύπτει West: -βει **A**: -ρύει **u**, **Q** sscr
151 σικνὸς **Qu**: σικνὸς **A**
155 νεφροῦς **Q**: -ὰ **A**: -ὸν **u**
159 ψυχροποιὰ **Qu**: ψυχοποιὰ **A**
189 ὅμοιον **Qu**: ὅμιον **A**
193 νέαι **Qu**: νέοι **A**
199 ἰνώδης **Qu**: -εις **A**
209 ἀλῶν **Qu**: om. **A**
226 ἀνόστεως **Qu**: -στεος **A**
235 βλάβη **Qu**: -ει **A**

IVb. Peculiar readings of **A** which are in agreement with Boissonade's and Westerink's correction to the relevant line.

- 40 ἡ **A**, scr. West: εἰ **Qu**
107 κινάρα **A**, scr. West: κιννάρα **Qu**
134 σκόροδα **A**, scr. West: -ωδα **Qu**
136 ἄποιον **A**, Boiss: -ιον **Q**: -ον **u**
158 ἡ σταφίς σοι **Au**, **Q** (mg.): ἡ ἀσταφίς **Q** (textu)
188 δὲ **A**, add. Boiss: om. **Qu**

221 *χημαι* **A**, scr. West (*χημία* Gal.): *κίχλαι* ex *κῆχαι* **Q**: *ῆχαι* **u**

222 *σπόνδυλος* **A**, scr. West: *-ηλος* **Qu**

IVc. Peculiar readings of **A** which improve Westerink's edition (ll. 148, 187, 228):

Ἡ κολοκύνθη καὶ λύει τὴν γαστέρα

148 *κολοκύνθη* **A**: *-νθα* **Qu**

A gives *κολοκύνθη*, the most common version of the word, which is also used in Galen's *De Alimentorum Facultatibus*,⁹ Psellos' source for this passage. It does not affect the metre, since it is the first syllable of the second metron, which is an anceps.

Τρόφιμος ἢ βάλανος εὐσάρκῳ φύσει,

187 *ῆ* **A**: *ό* **Qu**

Βάλανος is a feminine noun; cf. LSJ, s.v. *βάλανος*. Psellos' source is Galen's *De Alimentis Facultatibus*,¹⁰ in which the noun in question appears in the plural preceded by the feminine plural article αἱ. The use of ῆ rather than ό is also required for metrical reasons, as it is the last syllable of the first metron, which should be long.

ὅμοια τούτοις, λειόβατος καὶ βάτος·

228 *ὅμοια τούτοις, λειόβατο(ς) καὶ βάτος* **A**: *ὅμοια τούτοις καὶ λίβατος καὶ βάτος* **Qu**

Westerink queries at the *hapax legomenon* 'λίβατος' in his *apparatus criticus* with the annotation: 'quid?'.¹¹ **A** provides *λειόβατος*, which is actually a synonym of the word *βάτος*, that is a kind of fish; LSJ, s.v. *λειόβατος* and *βάτος*. The new reading is also correct in metrical terms.

⁹ Galen, *De Alimentorum Facultatibus* II 3 (ed. C. G. KÜHN, *Claudii Galeni Opera omnia*, 20 vols. in 22. Leipzig 1821-1833, VI 562, 1 = ed. J. WILKINS, *Sur les facultés des aliments*. Paris 2013, 94, 4).

¹⁰ Galen, *De Alimentorum Facultatibus* II 38 (ed. KÜHN, *Claudii Galeni* VI 621, 4 = ed. WILKINS, *Facultés* 143, 16).

¹¹ WESTERINK, *Poemata*, 198: '228 λίβατος] quid?'; cf. É. RENAULD, *Quelques termes médicaux de Psellos*, *REG* 22 (1909) 251-256, 254.